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Security Council

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Resolution 2220 (2015)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 7447th meeting, on 22 May 2015

The Security Council,

Recalling its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, *noting* the significance of small arms and light weapons as the most frequently used weapons in the majority of recent armed conflicts and *emphasizing* that the excessive accumulation and destabilizing effect of small arms and light weapons have a potential to endanger civilians, including women, children, refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups,

Recalling its resolutions 1196 (1998), 1209 (1998), 1467 (2003) and 2117 (2013), the statements of its President of 25 April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/16), 19 March 2010 (S/PRST/2010/6), of 14 January 2009 (S/PRST/2009/1), of 29 June 2007 (S/PRST/2007/24), of 17 February 2005 (S/PRST/2005/7), of 19 January 2004 (S/PRST/2004/1), of 31 October 2002 (S/PRST/2002/30), of 31 August 2001 (S/PRST/2001/21) and of 24 September 1999 (S/PRST/1999/28), as well as other relevant resolutions of the Council and statements of its President, including on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, women and peace and security and children in armed conflict,

Emphasizing that the right of individual and collective self-defence recognized in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate security demands of all countries should be fully taken into account, and *recognizing* that small arms and light weapons are traded, manufactured and retained by States for legitimate security, sporting and commercial considerations,

Noting that this resolution focuses on the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including in respect of Council-mandated arms embargoes,

Gravely concerned that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world continue to pose threats to international peace and security, cause significant loss of life, contribute to instability and insecurity and continue to undermine the effectiveness of the Security Council in discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security,

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Reiterating its deep regret that civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties in situations of armed conflict and *recalling with grave concern* that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons fuel armed conflicts and have a wide range of negative human rights, humanitarian, development and socioeconomic consequences, in particular on the security of civilians in armed conflict, including the disproportionate impact on violence perpetrated against women and girls and exacerbating sexual and gender-based violence,

Gravely concerned by the detrimental effects of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on children in armed conflict, in particular due to recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict, as well as their rerecruitment, killing and maiming, rape and other sexual violence, abductions, and attacks on schools and hospitals in violation of international law,

Recalling the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, and the obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all circumstances,

Underlining the responsibility of States to prevent threats posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons to international peace and security, and the devastating impact on civilians in armed conflict, and *reaffirming* that parties to armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians and recalling that States bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of all individuals within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction, as provided for by relevant international law,

Recognizing that the misuse of small arms and light weapons has resulted in grave crimes, expressing its strong opposition to impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law and serious violations and abuses of human rights and emphasizing in this context the responsibility of States to comply with their relevant obligations to end impunity and to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity or other serious violations of international humanitarian law is consistent with their obligations under international law,

Reaffirming the relevant provisions of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including paragraphs 138 and 139 thereof regarding the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity,

Recognizing that efforts by the United Nations aimed at addressing the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons should be a part of a comprehensive and integrated approach that incorporates and strengthens coherence between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law activities and addresses the root causes of conflict, strengthens community security and mitigates armed violence,

Recognizing that insecurity resulting from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons negatively impact conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, the consolidation of peace in

countries emerging from conflict and their post-conflict development, including education, health and economic opportunity,

Acknowledging the important contribution of Council-mandated arms embargoes in countering the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and *noting* the need to improve information sharing on possible arms embargo violations between groups of experts, peacekeeping missions within their mandates and other relevant United Nations entities,

Recognizing the desirability of aligning objectives of Council-mandated arms embargoes with the overall objectives of other efforts in the relevant Member State or region by United Nations entities, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations, including on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, improving physical security and stockpile management practices and enhancement of border security,

Reiterating that United Nations peacekeeping operations and other relevant Council-mandated entities, located in a Member State or region with a Council-mandated arms embargo, may, if deemed necessary by the Council, assist with appropriate expertise and capacity-building for host governments in the field of weapons collection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes, enhancing physical security and stockpile management practices, record keeping and tracing capacities, development of national export and import control systems, enhancement of border security, and strengthening judicial institutions and law enforcement capacity,

Recalling with concern the close connection between international terrorism, transnational organized crime, drugs trafficking, money-laundering, other illicit financial transactions, illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and arms trafficking, and the link between the illegal exploitation of natural resources, illicit trade in such resources and the proliferation and trafficking of arms as a major factor fuelling and exacerbating many conflicts,

Emphasizing that the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons can aid terrorism and illegal armed groups and facilitate increasing levels of transnational organized crime and *underscoring* that such illicit trafficking could harm civilians, including women and children, create instability and long-term governance challenges and complicate conflict resolution,

Stressing the utmost importance of women's full and effective participation in all efforts related to countering the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, in line with its resolution 1325 (2000),

Expressing concern at the continuing threats posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons to the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and their effectiveness in implementing peacekeeping mandates, and to the safety and security of humanitarian workers and their effective provision of humanitarian assistance,

Recognizing the value of effective physical security and management of stockpiles of small arms, light weapons and ammunition as an important means to prevent the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, in accordance with global and regional standards, including through

the application of voluntary guidelines, such as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) developed under the UN *Safer*Guard programme, and the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) in arms and ammunition stockpile management practices,

Noting that marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons by Member States, particularly countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, can serve to detect violations of applicable arms embargoes and identify weaknesses in stockpile management,

Acknowledging the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December 2014, *taking note* of a great number of signatories to the Treaty and the increasing number of State Parties, and *looking forward* to the important contribution it can make to international peace, security and stability, reducing human suffering and promoting cooperation,

Reaffirming the significance and central role of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, including the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as crucial instruments in countering the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons,

Noting with appreciation the efforts made by Member States, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations in addressing threats to international peace and security posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and *noting* the significant role of civil society in supporting such efforts,

Welcoming the Secretary-General's report to the Council of 27 April 2015 entitled "Small arms and light weapons" (S/2015/289),

Expressing its determination to implement existing and to take further practical steps to prevent the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including in support of other ongoing processes,

1. *Welcomes* efforts made by Member States, regional and subregional organizations in addressing the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and encourages the establishment or strengthening, where appropriate, of subregional and regional cooperation, coordination and information sharing mechanisms, in particular, transborder customs cooperation and networks for information-sharing, with a view to preventing, combating, and eradicating illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons;

2. *Reiterates* that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons fuel conflict and have devastating impact on the protection of civilians, reiterates its demand that all parties to armed conflict comply strictly with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, and

stresses the need for parties to take all required measures to avoid civilian casualties, respect and protect the civilian population;

3. *Reemphasizes* its call on parties to armed conflict, in this regard, to comply with obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect humanitarian personnel, facilities and relief consignments, and to take measures to eradicate the negative impact of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on humanitarian actors, and to take all required steps to facilitate the safe, rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments, equipment and personnel;

4. *Expresses* its intention to continue to take due regard of issues related to the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons when considering or updating mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations and other Council-mandated entities, and in this regard *encourages* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to consider identifying capacities of United Nations entities that could contribute to countering the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons at the earliest possible stage, to consider involving these entities in strategic assessments and technical assessment missions and to present options for United Nations engagement in this regard, including through assisting host countries in weapons collection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes, enhancing physical security and stockpile management practices, record keeping and tracing capacities, development of national export and import control systems, enhancement of border security, and strengthening judicial institutions and law enforcement capacity;

5. *Emphasizes* that Member States, United Nations peacekeeping operations and other Council-mandated entities, where appropriate and mandated, and intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations, may be in a position to assist in capacity-building of governments upon request to ensure the safe and effective management, storage, security, marking, record-keeping and tracing of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons, and collection and/or destruction of surplus, seized, unmarked, or illicitly held weapons and ammunition and *encourages* Member States and intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations in a position to do so to render assistance upon request in implementing these tasks, including through examining technologies that would improve the tracing and detection of illicit transfer in small arms and light weapons, as well as measures to facilitate the transfer of such technologies;

6. *Encourages* the United Nations to gather and share best practices of Member States, related to safe storage, marking and destruction of weapons collected as part of weapons collection and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes;

7. *Recognizes* that the effectiveness of weapons collection and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes depends *inter alia* on providing sustainable opportunities to former combatants and on the ability of State institutions to foster an inclusive environment in which people feel safe and secure;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of security sector reform in improving the ability of the State to extend public security and rule of law within its boundaries, to train professional, effective and accountable security personnel and assisting States

to develop proper procedures for weapon stockpile management, physical security, marking, record-keeping and tracing;

9. *Reaffirms its responsibility* to monitor the implementation of Council-mandated arms embargoes and *reaffirms its intention* to take appropriate measures, when needed, to strengthen arms embargo monitoring mechanisms including inter alia through assigning dedicated staff, monitoring units to relevant United Nations Missions to effectively monitor arms embargoes;

10. *Recognizes* the need for Member States to put in place, where they do not exist, adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the production of small arms and light weapons within their areas of jurisdiction and over the export, import, transit or retransfer of such weapons, in order to prevent illegal manufacture of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, or their diversion to unauthorized recipients;

11. *Urges* Member States, relevant United Nations entities, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations, in a position to do so and where appropriate, to cooperate and share information on suspected traffickers and trafficking routes, suspect financial transactions and brokering activities for, or diversions of, small arms or light weapons, and other information relevant to the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation or misuse of small arms and light weapons, with potentially affected States and with relevant United Nations entities, including experts groups assisting sanctions committees and peacekeeping operations;

12. *Urges* Member States that have not yet done so to take measures, pursuant to their national laws, to regulate brokering taking place under their jurisdiction for small arms and light weapons, including measures that may require brokers to register or obtain written authorization before engaging in brokering;

13. *Reiterates* that Council-mandated arms embargoes should have clearly established objectives and provisions for regular review of the measures with a view to lifting them when the objectives are met, in accordance with the terms of the applicable Council resolutions, *acknowledges* that when considering a partial or complete termination, suspension or adjustment of an arms embargo the Council should, where applicable, take into account the capacities by the Member State subject to an arms embargo to, inter alia, apply physical security and stockpile management practices, implement marking, record keeping and tracing, develop national export and import control systems, enhance border security, and strengthen judicial institutions and law enforcement capacity and *welcomes* the conduct of assessment missions to evaluate progress by Member States subject to a Council-mandated arms embargoes towards meeting the conditions set by the Council for their termination or adjustment and to provide options and recommendations regarding United Nations and other technical assistance to these Member States or their regions;

14. *Notes* that where Sanctions Committees are mandated to determine if an exemption to the arms embargo is justified, they could benefit from information on the existing holdings including from the information on small arms and light weapons voluntarily provided to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and self defence and security needs of arms and related materiel by the government, quantities of arms and related materiel received on the basis of previously approved

exemptions, conditions of their storage, as well as quantities of arms and related materiel destroyed through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, if applicable, and *encourages* Member States, Expert Groups and the Secretary-General to provide such information, if available and upon request by the relevant Sanctions Committee;

15. *Encourages* Sanctions Committees to maintain dialogue on implementation of arms embargoes with Member States, in particular those in the region, as well as international, regional and subregional organizations and other stakeholders including by inviting them to meet with the Committee and holding by the Chair of open briefings for all interested Member States;

16. *Encourages* Member States to better understand the impact of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on women and children, through, inter alia, strengthening the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age and developing appropriate and effective national risk assessment criteria;

17. *Calls upon* Member States, United Nations entities, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations to take into consideration the specific impact of conflict and post-conflict environments on women's security, mobility, economic activity and opportunities, to mitigate the risk of women from becoming active players in the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons;

18. *Urges* Member States, United Nations entities, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations, to take further measures to facilitate women's full and meaningful participation in all policymaking, planning and implementation processes to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, and in that regard, *encourages* empowering women, including through capacity building efforts, as appropriate, to participate in the design and implementation of efforts related to the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and *calls upon* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and justice and security sector reform efforts to take into account the particular needs of women and children associated with armed forces and armed groups, with the participation of women, and to provide for their full access to these programmes inter alia, through consultation with civil society, including women's organizations, as appropriate;

19. *Reaffirms* its decision that States shall eliminate the supply of weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to terrorists, as well as its calls for States to find ways of intensifying and accelerating the exchange of operational information regarding trafficking in arms, and to enhance coordination of efforts on national, subregional, regional and international levels;

20. *Recognizes* the importance of preventing the illicit transfers and sales of weapons and ammunition, including small arms and light weapons, to armed groups and criminal networks that target civilians and civilian objects and *underlines* that such transfers could exacerbate conflict or facilitate the commitment of serious violations of international humanitarian law and serious violations and abuses of human rights;

21. *Urges* States to consider ratifying or acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible and encourages States, intergovernmental, regional and

subregional organizations that are in a position to do so to render assistance in capacity-building to enable States Parties to fulfil and implement the Treaty's obligations;

22. *Recognizes* that improving national implementation of Council-mandated arms embargoes and mandating United Nations peacekeeping operations and other relevant Council-mandated entities to assist in building national and regional capacities by States, in particular related to transfer control systems, physical security and stockpile management, record-keeping and preventing diversion of small arms and light weapons and related materiel to illicit markets, may contribute to a more effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty by the States Parties;

23. *Notes* that implementation of national reporting provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty by the States Parties can contribute to increased transparency of small arms and light weapons transfers and could inform the United Nations activities related to countering the illicit transfer and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons;

24. *Encourages* all Member States that have not yet done so to consider acceding to and to implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, including the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunitions;

25. *Stresses* the need for full and effective implementation by States at the national, regional and international levels, of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, in particular, paying special attention to applying measures contained therein on the prevention of the diversion of small arms and light weapons, in order to make real progress in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his reports and briefings to the Council on country-specific situations, more comprehensive and detailed information and recommendations relating to the impact of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including information specific to such impact on refugees, internally displaced persons, women, children and other vulnerable groups;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include information and recommendations regarding the impact of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on the protection of civilians in armed conflict as a sub-item in his next reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict;

28. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to direct any relevant United Nations agencies operating in a State or region in relation to which the Council maintains an arms embargo provide the utmost assistance to the work of relevant sanctions committees, experts groups and other relevant United Nations entities in the implementation and compliance monitoring of that arms embargo, and *requests* the Secretary-General to examine and present, in his next report on small

arms and light weapons, best practices and arrangements that could be used by the United Nations peacekeeping operations and other relevant Council-mandated entities to guide the implementation of their mandated tasks on the implementation and compliance monitoring of arms embargoes and the provision of assistance and expertise to host States, sanctions committees and experts groups.

29. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his annual reports on children and armed conflict as well as in his country-specific reports on children and armed conflict relevant information and recommendations regarding the impact of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on children, to the extent consistent within the existing mandates;

30. *Encourages* the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (*2011*) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, within their existing mandates and in close cooperation with all relevant United Nations counter-terrorism bodies, to focus on the threats posed by accessibility of weapons used by individuals and entities associated with al-Qaida and the supply and trafficking of weapons to them and *requests* the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to include in its next regular report to the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) information on such threats and to provide recommendations for actions to enhance the response to such threats;

31. *Encourages* the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), within their existing mandates and in close cooperation with all relevant United Nations counter-terrorism bodies, to focus on Member States' capacities and needs to address the threats posed by accessibility of weapons used by terrorists as well as to counter the supply and trafficking of weapons to terrorists and *requests* the CTED to report within the existing reporting framework to the Counter-Terrorism Committee on gaps in such capacities, and to provide concrete plans to facilitate technical assistance for strengthening Member States' capacities and to provide recommendations for actions to enhance response to such threats;

32. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to submit to the Council on a biennial basis a report on small arms and light weapons, including on the implementation of this resolution, and affirms its intention to consider the report in a timely manner;

33. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.